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I have listened to papers presented to the Mathematical Society, which were wholly unintelligible to me, and I learned on inquiry on one occasion that two of the foremost mathematicians in the country, who were present, were equally in the dark. Such exhibits are often presented by men who are ambitious to say something, and who have nothing of any importance to say. It is difficult to give advice to them, it is a somewhat delicate matter, but they need advice. Many technical details which are not only proper, but necessary in a published paper, may be omitted in the oral presentation of that paper. Any person of ordinary good sense should know how to adapt an oral presentation to an audience.

There is a growing tendency among a certain class of scientific men, to lose all interest in everything outside of their own narrow horizons. This is much to be regretted. But such men have their remedy in their own hands. No one can object to the formation of physical or chemical societies, but it is to be hoped that we are not all so limited in our horizons that we shall advise academies of science to cease to exist.

FRANCIS E. NIPHER

#### A PROPOSED ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

AT the Philadelphia meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science about twenty men interested in ecology met informally on the evening of December 30, 1914, to consider the advisability of organizing an American Ecological Society. The immediate occasion for the conference was an expression of feeling on the part of Professor R. H. Wolcott and Professor V. E. Shelford to the effect that there is now no adequate opportunity for plant and animal ecologists to meet together, and also that there is for ecologists an urgent need of summer field meetings in addition to the present winter meetings.

The conference was attended by Messrs. Adams, Bartlett, Blodgett, Bray, Cannon, Cowles, Dachnowski, Griggs, Harshberger, Hill, Jennings, MacDougal, Nichols, Pearse, Shantz, Shelford, Shreve, Taylor and Wolcott,

Professor Harshberger being selected chairman. The opinion was practically unanimous that the time is ripe for the organization of an Ecological Society, and it was voted, in connection with the Columbus meeting of the American Association, to call a conference of all ecologists interested in the formation of such a society. A committee was appointed to call such a conference and present a scheme of organization, the committee consisting of Professor J. W. Harshberger (chairman), Professor V. E. Shelford (vice-chairman), Professor H. C. Cowles (secretary-treasurer), Professor R. H. Wolcott, Professor Charles C. Adams, Dr. Forrest Shreve.

Announcement will be made later of the exact time and place of the Columbus conference, but it may be assumed that it will not be earlier than Tuesday, December 28, nor later than Thursday, December 30, 1915. The purpose of this early announcement is to give ample opportunity for full expression of opinion. It is hoped that all working ecologists will write to the undersigned, noting (1) whether the proposed society is favored or disfavored and why, and (2) whether attendance at the Columbus conference is to be expected.

HENRY C. COWLES

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

#### GREENE VARDIMAN BLACK

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: Will you permit me to call attention to the death of Dean Greene Vardiman Black? He was a figure of world-wide importance. Even before he was called to the deanship of Northwestern University Dental School he had established an international reputation as a man of science, and I think it fair to say that no man in his time—perhaps in any time—has done more to advance his profession.

He brought to his work a broad general and sound scientific training. He had the natural equipment of a man of science. It was his research work which developed and practically gave to the world the amalgam of to-day. He was the inventor of one of the first cord driven, foot power, dental engines. His scientific contributions number nearly one thousand.

He has been recognized by medical and scientific societies in this country and abroad. Five years ago he was given an appreciation banquet by the Chicago Odontographic Society. Among the delegates were many from distant places in the United States, and gifts were received from this and foreign countries.

In 1912, he was the recipient of the Miller prize of the International Dental Federation. Dr. Black was the first to receive this medal, and the award was made to him because of his researches and work in many branches of dental science. The medal was delivered personally by Floristan Aguilar, of Madrid.

At Northwestern, he found a school of moderate equipment which he built up until it acquired a world-wide reputation, and it has become in size one of the largest, if not the largest in the country. His former pupils are scattered over the world—in almost every civilized country—in America, in Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. He is one of the outstanding great figures in professional education in this city.

His two great works are "Dental Anatomy" and "Operative Dentistry," which are standards in dental schools of to-day.

A. W. HARRIS

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

#### SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

*Selected Papers.* Surgical and Scientific, from the writings of Roswell Park, late Professor of Surgery in the University of Buffalo and Surgeon-in-Chief to the Buffalo General Hospital. With a memoir by CHARLES C. STOCKTON, M.D. Published by the Courier Company, Buffalo, N. Y. 1914. Pp. 381.

No finer memorial could exist for Roswell Park, surgeon, scientist, litterateur, historian and educator, than this book of papers selected from the huge list of writings, the bibliography of which shows the extent of his surgical interests.

These selected papers, including one of Dr. Park's earliest, as well as the very latest paper prepared by him, portray vividly how during his thirty-six most active years his surgical and scientific interests developed and ex-

panded. Especially does one wonder at the amount of work accomplished during the last five years of his life as shown by the output of no less than twenty-one important papers, each of which bears evidence of active laboratory research and hours of library study.

Many of these papers are distinctly technical in character, but whether discussing the intricate details of a difficult surgical technic or the results of laboratory researches, Dr. Park never loses sight of the ultimate aim of surgical technic and laboratory findings—their humanitarian significance.

One is particularly impressed with the keen intellect, which, in the midst of large surgical activities and the stress of ill-health, could study and digest such scientific details, along other than his own special lines of research, as are included in the references listed after the paper "Of What Does the Universe Consist?" His interest in radioactivity, however, is but one of the many instances in which he made an absorbing study of some new physical or chemical discovery, that he might discern its widest clinical application.

One must read between the lines of these papers the important part played by Dr. Park himself in the researches which he discusses. Another writer of the history of carcinoma, for example, would carry his account to a later date and would not fail to speak of Dr. Park as the prime mover in the establishment of the Gratwick Laboratory, now the New York State Laboratory and Hospital for the study of Malignant Diseases. So also in writing of "The Present Status of Antiseptic Surgery" and the "Primary Antiseptic Occlusion and Treatment of Gunshot Wounds," another writer would speak with enthusiasm of Dr. Park's early acceptance of the principle of antiseptics, and of his studies of infections, which were the prime reason for his appointment to deliver the Mütter Lectures on Surgical Pathology at Philadelphia in 1892.

The brief biography by Dr. Charles T. Stockton is satisfying in its delineation of those periods and experiences in Dr. Park's life which contributed most to make him the man whom his fellow citizens, his pupils, his